

**Carlson Funeral Service, Inc.
2007 Pursuit of Excellence Program
Ref: Criteria 1. E. Innovative Program Essay**

As part of Carlson Funeral Service's on going commitment to community outreach and support, the staff participated in a "mock accident" recreation and open discussion about the ramifications of drunk driving. The goal of the program was to educate Rhinelander High School Students about the consequences of drinking and driving as well as the importance of making quality decisions.

The program was organized in conjunction with the Students Against Drunk Driving at Rhinelander High School, local law enforcement agencies, fire, rescue, and medical agencies, the Oneida County Medical Examiners Office, and the Rhinelander High School Administration.

On April 24, 2007, an accident scene was staged on the city street in front of Rhinelander High School that depicted an auto crash involving three vehicles with the operator who caused the crash driving while intoxicated. The extremely realistic scene involved overturned and severely damaged cars with actors who portrayed injured and deceased persons as a result of the crash. The entire student body of ninth through twelfth graders at the high school were led to the scene as if the accident had just occurred. Law enforcement agencies responded followed by rescue and medical personnel who performed extrications and transports for the injured.

The medical examiner was summoned to pronounce death for three people involved in the crash followed by a call to the funeral home for transport of the deceased. Carlson Funeral Home responded with their hearse and made removals just as if the accident was a real scene. Students witnessed first hand the consequences of drinking and driving and the hard cold reality of the aftermath of a bad decision.

Following the completion of the exercise, participants addressed students about the scene they had just witnessed and while staged for their awareness, the scene plays out in real life everyday. John Mayo of Carlson

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Funeral Home addressed the students concerning the struggles and challenges the families of the deceased would now face and ended his message with the thought that "there are no second chances" when scenes like this happen in real life.

This program was the result of several months of planning and involved the coordination of over ten agencies and fifty individuals. The program went exactly to plan and students stood in somber silence with much to consider as they face decisions about alcohol and other drugs in their own lives.

The feedback from students, participants, and the community as a whole was very positive and a greater awareness was made at the high school during a time when end of the year and graduation parties are common. If just one life was saved because a student decided against drinking and driving or decided against riding with someone who is under the influence, all participants felt the effort was well worth the time involved.

The funeral home benefited in many ways from the program. First, Carlson Funeral Home established itself as a leader in community involvement when it comes to death and dying issues. Secondly, the firm was exposed in considerable press coverage of the event. Thirdly, funeral staff could network and review procedures with agencies that would be involved in a real situation of similar magnitude. And finally, students, participants, and the community received another prompt that Carlson Funeral Home does truly care about the well being of our town and the people who live here.



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Family Owned And Operated

Alcohol and proms do not mix as Chesnee High School Junior and Senior students found out Friday, April 13, 2007, during a staged re-enactment of an alcohol-related mock disaster.

One of the reasons Alcohol Awareness Month is held in April is because it is the beginning of the prom and graduation season, a time when celebrations can turn dangerous for underage drinkers. In 2005, during the months of April, May and June, 676 students under the age of 21 were killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Matthew Scruggs, an employee of Eggers Funeral Home & Crematory, who is also the Captain of the Chesnee Community Fire Department, initiated the idea to show students what can happen when alcohol is a part of prom night celebrations. Another of our employees, Dexter Blanton, a safety officer with the Mayo Fire Department, helped with this disaster. Eggers Funeral Home & Crematory assisted in sponsoring this event along with many others in the community.

While television cameras were rolling, the alcohol impaired actors were cuffed and hauled away by Spartanburg County Detectives. One of the injured actresses was airlifted by the Spartanburg Regional Hospital Medivac helicopter to receive treatment. Eggers Funeral Home & Crematory provided a hearse and staff members, Frank Moffitt and Jerry Gibson, to remove the actor "victim" who was pronounced dead at the crash scene.

The production was quite dramatic in order to emphasize the fact that alcohol consumption is one of the leading causes of death and injury among teenagers. According to experts, the number one deterrent to underage drinking is talking with teens about the dangers.

"Hopefully the reality of drinking and driving will impact these teens' decisions, not only on prom night, but any time in their lives," Moffitt said.

I. Basic Requirements
E. Innovative Program

Mock Automobile Accident

By, Doyle Gylten, Funeral Director

Joseph Vertin & Sons Funeral Home is a member of the newly formed group "Wilkin County ATOD Coalition." This group of businesses and individuals was established to reduce the abuse of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs in our community.

Joseph Vertin & Sons Funeral Home and its employees were key participants in a mock car accident scenario for the "pre-prom" anti-drinking campaign held the morning of May 7, 2007 near the Breckenridge High School. We worked closely with the ATOD coalition and Ambulance Service, Inc. in the two-car "accident." We arranged to bring our hearse and two funeral directors to the scene to make the removal of the "fatality." This really hit home with the students.

The whole point of this exercise was to bring a harsh dramatization of what drinking and driving can do to the students. We thought the best way was to be as authentic as possible. There were three couples in the accident. One girl was a fatality. The ambulance service, Breckenridge Fire Department and Breckenridge Police Department and the Life-flight helicopter from Merit Care Hospital in Fargo, ND were all participants. We even had a news team come from WDAY Channel 6 News.

In order to really get the student's attention, I "made up" the "victims" with theatrical makeup, glue-on trauma appliances and fake blood. This really brought out the kid's reactions. The wounds looked very authentic, as many of the kids said it was "really gross." (I took this as "mission accomplished.")

The morning began as the 11th and 12th graders were seated on bleachers in front of the two cars that were covered with a large tarp. The tarps were removed and the scenario began.

The policemen were first on the scene with their lights and sirens blaring. Soon the fire trucks and ambulance arrived. It really looked like chaos. To really make a point the female fatality was taken out of her car first and laid right in front of the students on the street. She was covered in blood and had extensive trauma. Keep in mind all of these victims were wearing their prom dresses and tuxes.

While the ambulance teams and firemen were working on extricating the kids, you could hear screams and begging for help coming from within the cars. As the last living patient was being taken away in the ambulance, the hearse was brought in from around the block. We drove slowly in front of the bleachers and parked directly in front of the fatality. She was placed in a body bag, zipped up, and lifted up to the funeral home cot by the firemen. The cot cover was closed and she was placed in the hearse and slowly driven away.

I can say without a doubt that all eyes were on this scene. We hope this dramatization showed how an accident like this can be easily avoided by just using common sense when it comes to alcohol and driving.